

Form and Function – Classroom Teacher

Questions from the Webinar - March 6, 2019

Admission

1. If someone already passed both content and PPR (transfer candidate), do we only upload the content exam as “eligible”?

Just to confirm – PACT admissions should have their content test added as “eligible” to test approval to signal TEA of their certification area.

Even though a candidate has passed a content test under the Pre-Admission Content Test (PACT) process or through the approval of another EPP, the admitting EPP should upload the content test as “eligible”. If the EPP uploads the candidate for only the Pedagogy and Professional Responsibilities (PPR) test, it is difficult for TEA to determine the certificate for which he or she has been admitted. If TEA does not know the certificate for which the candidate has been admitted, it is difficult to determine whether the EPP has properly admitted the candidate and may result in a reporting discrepancy.

2. The process for bulk updating in ECOS always results in a lot of error messages. Will there be any changes to the system to make it easier to bulk upload?

Some of the errors you may see with the bulk upload process are related to formatting of the CSV file. Be sure that you follow exactly the guidance provided on the ECOS screen for bulk uploading. For example, you may not use punctuation marks other than commas. Spaces and stray marks will result in errors. You may wish to transfer the data in your spreadsheet to Notepad to check for stray marks and spaces.

3. Does the GPA rule stand for candidates who have passed the exam through PACT?

My first question was about the slide with GPA less than 2.5, and you said something about they should PACT.

Passing a Pre-Admission Content Test (PACT) for admission does not waive the GPA requirement. Per 19 TAC §227.10(a)(3)(B), candidates must meet the minimum GPA requirement unless they have been accepted under the 10% exception allowance, based on extraordinary circumstances and documented work, business, or career experience that demonstrates achievement equivalent to the academic achievement represented by the GPA requirement of 2.5. A candidate admitted under the 10% exception must have a passing score on the appropriate content certification examination(s) prior to admission.

4. Can you clarify contingency? Why would you accept (a candidate) near the end of the last semester? How can they take certification courses and student teach if they are not formally admitted first?

Per 19 TAC §227.15, an alternative or post-baccalaureate program may accept an applicant on a contingency basis pending receipt of an official transcript showing degree conferred, provided the applicant is currently enrolled and expects to complete a bachelor’s degree at the end of the semester in which admission to the program is sought, provided all other admission requirements have been met.

Contingency admission allows a graduating college senior who intends to enter an EPP to begin taking content examinations and/or begin coursework to reduce the time prior to becoming eligible for employment as a teacher. EPPs are not required to contingently admit an applicant; however, this option allows an individual to make progress toward meeting requirements while finishing the last semester of the bachelor's degree. A contingently admitted candidate may not begin an internship or be issued a certificate until the degree is conferred.

5. For those who are admitted under contingency admission, is the GPA calculated at the time of admission, or should the GPA be revised when the degree has been conferred?

The official grade point average (GPA) is calculated at the time of admission, whether the admission is on a contingency basis or formal admission. The GPA at the time of admission is the GPA that will be reported to TEA on the GPA spreadsheet during the ASEP reporting. The EPP must collect a final, official transcript to ensure that an appropriate degree has been conferred.

6. We offer a 5th year Master's program. Students begin taking Master's courses their senior year. They are admitted after meeting the requirements of that program but do not meet the TEA admission requirements until their undergraduate degree is awarded. Which date do I use for reporting, admission to the program or undergraduate degree awarded date. Also, what is the impact of taking Master's courses before the undergraduate degree is awarded as it relates to "no courses before full admission?"

The admission date to the EPP is the date on which the applicant meets all TEA and EPP requirements for admission. For a post-baccalaureate program, this would be no sooner than the conferral of a bachelor's degree, unless the candidate was contingently admitted. Admission to a university's degree program is not necessarily the same as EPP admission.

Per 19 TAC 227.15(e), a university alternative or post-baccalaureate program may admit an applicant if prior coursework at the same IHE was part of a degree to be conferred, a prerequisite for a master's degree leading to initial certification, or a different post-baccalaureate program of study.

English Language Proficiency

7. I thought the speaking score (for the TOEFL test) was a 26.

Effective May 5, 2006, the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC) approved a speaking score of 26 as the acceptable standard on the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL iBT) for persons who were not able to demonstrate English proficiency by holding a degree from an accredited college or university in the United States or an out-of-country institution of higher education where English was the official language of instruction.

Effective October 17, 2017, the SBEC adopted a new standard for the TOEFL requiring minimum scores of 24 on the Speaking, 22 on the Listening, 22 on the Reading, and 21 on the Writing portions for applicants who are not able to demonstrate English language proficiency with an undergraduate or graduate degree from the United States or a country found in [Figure: 19 TAC §230.11\(b\)\(5\)\(C\)](#).

8. Does admission to a community college for an associate's degree count for English language proficiency?

Per 19 §227.10(a)(7) and §230.11(b)(5), applicants who are seeking a certificate that requires a bachelor's degree or higher must hold, at a minimum, a conferred bachelor's degree from an accredited institution of higher education. For applicants who are seeking a certificate that requires an associate's degree or higher, such as Health Science: Grades 6-12, the degree may be a conferred associate's degree from an accredited institution of higher education. Admission to a college would not demonstrate English language proficiency. An acceptable degree must be conferred.

9. If we have an international student in our B.S. in Education program, he or she is in our certification program. We will not ask him/her (for a) TOEFL score since he or she will graduate from our degree program, right?

Per 19 TAC §227.10(a)(7)(B), an applicant to a university undergraduate program that leads to a bachelor's degree may satisfy the English language proficiency requirement by meeting the English language proficiency requirement of the accredited IHE at which the applicant is enrolled. By the time the student graduates with a bachelor's degree, he or she would meet the requirement for certification through their conferred degree at an accredited university in the United States.

Background Checks

10. (Does) TAC 240 (249) lists specific "events" that may disqualify an individual from certification?

19 TAC Chapter 249, Disciplinary Proceedings, Sanctions, and Contested Cases, includes offenses that could result in the denial of an application for a certificate. Applicants should be made aware of the information contained in these rules, their potential ineligibility for certification based on the offense and the underlying conduct, and their right to seek a Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation prior to admission in an educator preparation program.

EPPs should not speculate on the eligibility of an applicant, but should provide information about the option of a Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation.

11. If an EPP applicant has an arrest record for a felony offense, can that candidate be denied admission? Note: The candidate has not yet been convicted.

Investigations staff will review the fingerprint-based criminal history of all applicants prior to approving an application for certification. The division will open an administrative investigation if the applicant's criminal record indicates he or she may have engaged in conduct that would make them unworthy to instruct or supervise the youth of the state. If the investigation finds that the application should be denied, staff will send the applicant written notice of the denial. At that point, the applicant will have the right to appeal.

As part of the admission process, EPPs should provide a written statement for an applicant to sign verifying that he or she has been provided information about the potential impact of the criminal background check and may seek a preliminary criminal history evaluation.

12. Please clarify the pre-screening process for background checks. Are students paying for their own?

Per 19 TAC 227.10(c), EPPs shall inform all applicants, in writing, of the right to request a criminal history evaluation letter as provided in Chapter 227, Subchapter B. Applicants and candidates should be directed to the [Preliminary Criminal History Evaluation-FAQs](#) page for procedures and fees. The EPP is not required to pay this fee. The evaluation is voluntary and non-binding.

13. How do you know if a school district uses the TEA method for fingerprinting?

All school districts and charter schools are required to fingerprint employees by submitting the employee's information to TEA. This will initiate the TEA fingerprinting process, which will result in the school and the agency receiving the applicant's criminal history through the DPS Clearinghouse. As part of the collaboration process between EPPs and partner schools, the EPP may seek this information from the school. The school must upload employees through the TEA system rather than issuing a local education entity approval to fingerprint or accepting fingerprints done through other agencies.

Program Delivery

14. On teaching internships, must the candidate be "teacher of record"? In other words, if a candidate is seeking Special Education certificate, and they are in an "Inclusion" assignment, would this count as an internship?

Per 19 TAC §228.2(21) and §228.35(e)(2)(B), an intern must be serving as a full-time, paid classroom teacher in an assignment that matches the certification category sought, and must teach not less than an average of four hours each day. The assignment must be in an actual school setting that allows the intern to experience a full range of professional responsibilities.

A candidate completing an internship while seeking Special Education certification should be classified as a teacher and be serving special needs students. TEA strongly encourages candidates seeking certification in special education to also certify in a content area(s) so they can fully support instruction in one or more academic areas. See 19 TAC 231, Subchapter F for assignments for Special Education Teachers."

15. What is the cutoff date in the fall semester for an intern to begin teaching and be approved for certification at the end of the spring semester the same school year. For instance, if I start an internship on September 7, 2018, can I get certified at the end of the school year, or do I have to continue my internship through September 7, 2019?

Per 19 TAC §228.35(e)(2)(B), an internship must be for a minimum of one full school year, and may be for up to 30 school days fewer if due to maternity, military, illness, or bereavement leave, or if the intern is a late hire. A school year, if not referring to the school year of a particular public or private school, shall provide at least 180 days (75, 600 minutes) of instruction. The EPP would need to calculate the number of days and/or minutes of instruction to determine whether the educator meets this requirement. The EPP should retain documentation of the rationale when the internship is 30 days less than the full school year.

16. Is the Trade and Industrial Workforce Training certificate replacing the current Trade and Industrial 6-12 certificate?

TEA does not plan to eliminate the Trade and Industrial Education: Grades 6-12 certificate. Since the Trade and Industrial Workforce Training and Trade and Industrial Education certificates share some standards, TEA plans to develop a new examination that will be used for both certificates.

17. Can a candidate be issued an intern certificate for Trade and Industrial Education based on work experience alone, since they only take the PPR for Trades and Industrial Education?

Per 19 TAC §230.21(e), the Trade and Industrial Education (TIE): Grades 6-12 certificate does not require the candidate to pass a content examination. For that reason, an intern certificate for TIE may be issued without a passed test. EPPs should ensure that the candidate meets requirements for the number of years of occupational experience and any certification, license, or registration required. The Statement of Qualifications form is used for this purpose. Applicants for a probationary certificate in this area must have a passing score on the Trade and Industrial Education PPR test. Additional [TIE information](#) is located on the TEA website.

18. Can a full-day clinical teaching placement be longer than 14 weeks?

Clinical teaching and other training requirements, as stated in the Texas Administrative Code, are minimum standards. An EPP may require more than the minimum requirements in TAC. Any significant changes to program delivery should be sent to TEA.

19. For the new provisions for Educational Aides, does the field supervisor conduct observations during their clinical teaching assignment as they would under a normal internship?

Per 19 TAC §228.35(k)(2), an EPP must provide coursework and/or training, a clinical experience, a cooperating teacher, and ongoing support. An EPP must provide a minimum of one formal observation during the first third of the assignment, a minimum of one formal observation during the second third of the assignment, and a minimum of one formal observation during the last third of the assignment. Each formal observation by the field supervisor must be at least 45 minutes in duration, and must be on the candidate's site in a face-to-face setting. 19 TAC §228.35(a-g).

20. Regarding Educational Aide experience, is this only for those programs that offer clinical teaching or could this also be for those of us that only have internships?

Rules do not allow an educational aide to satisfy a teaching internship through educational aide experience. Assignment as an educational aide is not accepted in lieu of a teaching internship. Except for specific career and technical education (CTE) certificates, an Intern or Probationary Certificate requires a bachelor's degree and a teaching assignment that matches the certificate sought. An EPP must be approved by TEA to offer clinical teaching.

21. How many observations are required for an extended intern on a probationary certificate during a spring semester?

The observation schedule found in 19 TAC §228.35(g) should be followed, regardless of when the probationary certificate begins. If an internship must be extended because the first one was unsuccessful and the candidate is issued an intern certificate, the candidate must have a minimum of 3 formal observations in the first half and 2 formal observations in the last half of the internship. If a probationary certificate is issued, he or she must have 3 formal observations, one in each third of the extended internship.

22. Can you please explain the term " the observation schedule may vary if a candidate is pursuing additional certifications " does this apply for example Special Education and Core EC-6? Two certifications?

If the candidate is pursuing certification in more than one assignment, he or she would need to be observed in each assignment according to the schedule found in 19 TAC §228.35(g), based on the

placement for clinical teaching or the type of certificate held for an internship. When determining the frequency and number of observations, candidates seeking additional certifications for special populations, such as special education, bilingual education, or English as a second language, would be considered to have one assignment. In these cases, the same group of students are being taught, and the subject matter is not different.

23. Are EPPs required to use the Statement of Eligibility form?

The TEA Statement of Eligibility for Internship form is not required, and many EPPs have developed their own document that provides a potential employer with sufficient information to consider a candidate for an internship position. If an EPP does not currently use a document of this nature, the EPP may wish to consider using the TEA form. Your program specialist can send you the form upon request.

24. Can you put the deactivation template with EPP Resources?

TEA has a template letter and instructions for requesting the deactivation of an intern or probationary certificate when a candidate resigns, is terminated, or is nonrenewed from employment, or withdraws or is released from the EPP during an internship. TEA will consider the possibility of posting this document on the Program Provider Resources page. In the meantime, you may contact your program specialist for the document.

25. Does the EPP provider training for appropriate relationships and digital learning need to be approved by TEA? When did the rule take effect? How do we track the courses for our records/audit?

Training regarding appropriate relationships, boundaries, and communications between educators and students, as well as instruction in digital learning/literacy were added in the 19 TAC §228.30 on December 20, 2018; however, the statutory requirements in the Texas Education Code §21.044 were effective immediately upon adoption in June 2017.

It is not required that TEA approve the training, but the training must meet the requirements as identified in rule. Evidence of the training that is retained in the EPP records would depend on the program and could be a syllabus identifying the training offered in a specific course or courses. If EPP curriculum was reviewed as part of a continuing approval review or a discretionary review, TEA would expect to see evidence of the coursework in the implemented curriculum.

26. Can you please clarify the digital learning? Is this the same survey link Mark sent to post on the TEA website?

Per 19 TAC 228.30(c)(8), EPPs must include in the curriculum for candidates seeking initial certification in any certification class instruction in digital learning, including a digital literacy evaluation followed by prescribed digital learning curriculum aligned with the International Society of Technology in Education (ISTE) standards.

This requirement for a program to provide this instruction in digital learning is different from the following request sent by Dr. Mark Olofson on March 1, 2019, which is part of a TEA reporting requirement:

As specified by the Texas Education Code 21.0452(b)(5), TEA is required to publicly post information about two facets of EPP curriculum related to teacher technology use.

This past fall, EPP stakeholders recommended that TEA collect links from EPPs and post these links in

one location on the TEA website for consumers to access. The purpose of the attached survey is to collect these links from you, the EPP. This survey should take less than 5 minutes to complete. You will have the opportunity to provide two links to your EPP's materials for two related categories of practices:

1. The activities offered by your EPP that are designed to prepare teachers to integrate technology effectively into curricula and instruction, including activities consistent with the principles of universal design for learning.
2. The activities offered by your EPP that are designed to prepare teachers to use technology effectively to collect, manage, and analyze data to improve teaching and learning to increase student academic achievement

The link for #1 and for #2 may be the same; please fill out both fields on the survey.

We asked that you complete this survey no later than April 1, 2019. If you have any questions, please email mark.olofson@tea.texas.gov.

27. I got an email about posting links about technology. Is a syllabus OK? What should this information look like?

The link needs to provide information about the activities offered by the EPP designed to prepare teachers to integrate technology into instruction, and to use technology to collect, manage, and analyze data. The Educator Preparation Advisory Committee (EPAC) suggested that programs submit links. These links will be posted together for all EPPs. EPPs have the freedom to decide what information they want their links to point to, provided they present the information required.

Testing

28. Test approval for finishers -- is there a time limit? Must a finisher be given test approval two or three years after becoming a finisher? With no additional preparation required?

Per 19 TAC §230.21(b), a candidate seeking standard certification as an educator based on completion of an approved EPP may take the appropriate certification examination(s) only at such time as the EPP determines the candidate's readiness to take the examinations, or upon successful completion of the EPP, whichever comes first. The rule does not impose a timeline; therefore, an EPP must provide test approval to a finisher.

The EPP should offer test preparation, and encourage the candidate to take advantage of the assistance; however, if he or she refuses, the EPP must provide test approval. If the certificate sought is no longer offered, and there is no comparable replacement certificate available, he or she may need to be readmitted to pursue a different certificate. In that case, the EPP would not be required to provide test approval until the EPP determines that the candidate is ready to test.

29. Does the PACT attempt count toward the 5-time test limit?

All attempts for any certification exam or portion of an exam currently count toward the five-time limit for the educator, regardless of the route he or she used to take the test. If a candidate takes a test under PACT, the attempt does not count toward the EPP's accountability rating for test results. Only tests approved by the EPP count for or against the EPP. All tests attempted by an educator count toward the testing limit.

30. Do all attempts count toward program or intern? Please explain further.

Per 19 TAC 229.4(a)(1)(A), the first two attempts of a test approved by the EPP will count for or against the EPP, provided the candidate was admitted after 12-27-2016.

31. If a candidate takes and fails 5 times, what is the next step? How long later does a candidate take the test again.

An examinee must wait at least 45 days after a failed test attempt to retake a test.

19 TAC §230.21(a) provides the guidelines for an examinee to request a waiver of the testing limit. The rule provides specific wait times for requesting the initial waiver and any subsequent waivers if the test is not passed following a waiver approval. Additional information is available on the [Test-Limit Waiver Information](#) webpage.

32. When we upload accepted candidates as “eligible” for a test, can the automatic approved test email not be sent? This is most confusing to the enrollee.

The business rules for ECOS are written to send educators automated emails as a means of notification of several events and changes in status, such as applications, test approvals, and certificate issuance. Since it is difficult to differentiate the changes, the emails are somewhat generic in nature. Therefore, when a test is newly uploaded, or a previously uploaded test status is changed, the email is sent. TEA encourages EPPs to advise their students to expect periodic emails from TEA regarding updates to test approvals or application status.

Certification Procedures

33. Can you please give more specific information on the certificate not becoming effective more than the 60 calendar days?

Per 19 TAC §230.97(a), the date of issuance of a certificate shall not precede the date all requirements are completed, and shall be the date the EPP verifies that the applicant has satisfied all certification requirements. However, the certificate shall not become effective more than 60 calendar days before TEA receives the application and recommendation.

If the application and recommendation are entered online no later than 60 days from the completion date, the effective date of the certificate should match the completion date. If the application and recommendation are entered more than 60 days from the completion date, the effective date of the certificate will not be the completion date, but will be dated according to the 60-day policy.

Example: If a candidate finishes all certification requirements on May 15, 2019, and applies and/or is recommended by the EPP within 60 days, the effective date of the certificate will most likely be May 15, 2019. If the same individual did not apply and/or was not recommended until December 15, 2019, the effective date will likely be around October 15, 2019. If a certificate was required for the position, the late effective date may impact employment,

Best practice: Educator should be encouraged to apply promptly after completing requirements, and EPPs should recommend candidates within 60 days of the completion date.

34. Can a program still generate a P number for a new candidate when entering him/her in ASEP or does the candidate need to generate one through the Help Desk?

Although the function in ECOS that allows an EPP to generate a P number for a new candidate has not been disabled, TEA encourages programs to allow educators to initiate this process by submitting a TEA Help Desk ticket and a copy of their passport. This process ensures that the name and full demographic information are entered correctly.

Since the educator may be using the passport to test, it is important that the demographic information entered in ECOS match the document presented for testing. Once the educator obtains a social security number (SSN), the SSN card should be submitted through the Help Desk so that the P number can be converted to the SSN.

35. Is a name change considered a correction, and is there a charge?

An educator is not charged a fee for a name change. He or she should send a [Help Desk](#) ticket to Educator Certification along with a copy of a current government-issued ID, such as a state-issued driver's license, state-issued identification card, or a passport. Certificate corrections that require a fee are those that involve the certificate area(s) or effective dates.

36. Can you please explain the last part of the last slide?

Per 19 TAC 230.91(d), the representation of an individual's certificate status as maintained on the TEA website is the official record of the educator certification. This electronic representation of the certificate satisfies Texas Education Code §21.053(a), which requires individuals to present their certificates prior to employment by a school district.

Since TEA no longer prints or mails educator certificates, the "virtual" certificate is the official record of certification. EPPs and employers are strongly encouraged to verify certification by logging in to ECOS.

37. Under the Health Science field, is experience required in the United States?

Per 19 TAC233.14(c), the Health Science: Grades 6-12 certificate requires a current license, certification, or registration by a nationally recognized agency as a health professions practitioner and 2 years of full-time, wage-earning experience using the required license. Since educators will be preparing students for careers and potentials licensing in Texas or the United States, and since it is difficult to know whether licensing standards in other countries are comparable to U.S. standards, the experience should be earned in the U.S. and the license should be issued in the U.S.